

# Major Case Squad, Jones family hopeful for justice in “senseless killing”

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**ALTON** - “We want justice” have been words the family of **Romell L. Jones** has used again and again in media discussions this week about what investigators call “a senseless murder” of an 11-year-old child in Alton.

The family of Romell L. Jones stood quietly and solemnly in the back of the law enforcement center in Alton during the press conference. The family listened with great interest to **Major Case Squad Deputy Commander Jeff Connor** and **Madison County State’s Attorney Tom Gibbons** talk and answer media questions about the arrest of an Alton man on murder charges. **Ta’mon F. Ford, 18**, of Emerald Avenue in Alton, was charged with two counts of first-degree murder in the shooting of Romell L. Jones on Monday. The shooting occurred in front of the Alton Acres public housing community center.

**Sonya Dixon**, the mother of Romell Jones, said she was quite proud of all who worked on the case to find the alleged killer.

“I am proud of Alton Police Department and Major Case Squad for making a formal announcement about the arrest of the person they believe was the shooter,” Dixon said. “I want to thank the officers and everyone who helped out in the investigation and everyone else.”

Dixon plans to turn her mind completely back to her son and his funeral and burial now that the alleged killer has been apprehended.

**Robert Jones**, the father of Romell, said he wouldn't wish a death on anyone and he and the rest of the family are "real sad" over the turn of events. Robert now lives in St. Louis.

"Day by day, we just have to get through this together as a team," he said.

Ford could face up to 20-60 years in prison if convicted. He also is eligible for a 25-year sentence because a firearm was used. The judge has the ability to require a life sentence. Ford was denied bail in the case. He is resting in the Alton Police Department Jail at present time and will be eventually transferred to the Madison County Jail.

Deputy Major Task Force Commander Connor said after four long days of investigations and cooperation with the citizens of Alton, an arrest was made in the murder case.

"The citizens of Alton cooperated greatly and through that and the hard work of the men and women on the Major Case Squad, we were able to take the person responsible for this in custody this morning," Connor said.

Connor told the group that Ta'Mon F. Ford, 18, from Alton, was responsible for shooting a gun out of a car with striking the young child with the fire. He applauded investigators and the citizens of Alton for an arrest in such a quick period.

"It is a senseless murder and didn't have to happen," he said. "There was a disagreement between two people. There have been a lot of questions about Facebook and social media in this case. It did hit social media and the person came to the youth center and fired in a direction where there were 20 people standing outside the center. He struck the one."

Connor attributed solving the case to some tips, a lot of hard work and some luck.

"I still want to give kudos to the citizens because the phone rang so often with information," Connor said.

Connor described the victim **Romell Jones** "as innocent as anybody could be" in the crime.



Gibbons praised the 15 agencies which came together in the Major Case Squad to assist the Alton Police Department in the case to bring the person to justice.

“It was a tragic and senseless murder of an 11-year-old boy,” he said. “It is a terrible way to start a new year and it is a tragedy that this family will suffer forever. It is only through the hard work and constant, dogged determination of these individuals on the Major Task Force to make and arrest and get justice for this little boy and his family. These men and women haven’t slept since this happened.”

The primary goal to this point was to get the shooter in custody, Gibbons said. Now there can be other things worked on, but what is important Gibbons said “is we have the shooter and we are headed to justice. It is important to know he is in custody in Alton and is denied bail. He will be transported in the near future to the Madison County Jail and there he will sit.”

Connor said many of the officers on the Major Task Force have children of their own which makes this type of case “heartwrenching” to them.

“It has been a different atmosphere,” he said of the case. “The family is standing here and they have been cooperating also. They are happy this came to a conclusion.”



Asked what could be done to prevent other 11-year-old boys waiting in a parking lot to play basketball from being killed, Connor responded, “Unfortunately, there is no easy answer to solve violence or stop a person from making this kind of terrible choice.

“The best thing we do in law enforcement every day is send a positive message,” Connor said. “When the community comes together and sticks up for this little boy and his family we can make sure we can move ahead with charges. The most important thing is to get anyone thinking about this in the future they will be held accountable.”

### **Major Case Squad Press Conference on Romell Jones Murder Case:**



